

Time and space in the myth of Byblis and Caunus (Parth. 11, Conon 2, Ant. Lib. 30).

Part. 11.

Περὶ Βυβλίδος

Ἱστορεῖ Ἀριστόκριτος περὶ Μιλήτου καὶ Ἀπολλώνιος ὁ Ῥόδιος Καύνου κτίσει.

Περὶ δὲ Καύνου καὶ Βυβλίδος, τῶν Μιλήτου παίδων, διαφόρως ἱστορεῖται. Νικαίνετος μὲν γάρ φησι τὸν Καῦνον ἐρασθέντα τῆς ἀδελφῆς, ὥς οὐκ ἔληγε τοῦ πάθους ἀπολιπεῖν τὴν οἰκίαν καὶ ὀδεύσαντα πόρρω τῆς οἰκείας χώρας πόλιν τε κτίσαι καὶ τοὺς ἀπεσκεδασμένους τότε Ἰῶνας ἐνοικίσαι. λέγει δὲ ἔπει τοῖσδε:

**αὐτὰρ ὃ γε προτέρωσε κιὼν Οἰκούσιον ἄστν
κτίσσατο, Τραγασίην δὲ Κελαινέος ἦγετο παῖδα
ἧ οἱ Καῦνον ἔτικτεν ἀεὶ φιλέοντα θέμιστας.
γείνατο δὲ ῥαδαλῆς ἐναλίγκιον ἀρκεύθοισι
Βυβλίδα. τῆς ἦτοι ἀέκων ἠράσσατο Καῦνος.**

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βῆ δὲ †φερένδιος† φεύγων ὀφιώδεα †Κύπρον†,
καὶ †κάπρος ὕλιγενές† καὶ Κάρια ἱρὰ λοετρά.

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ἐνθ' ἦτοι πτολίεθρον ἐδείματο πρῶτος Ἰώνων.
αὐτὴ δὲ γνωτὴ ὀλολυγόνος οἶτον ἔχουσα
Βυβλὺς ἀποπρὸ πυλῶν Καύνου ὠδύρατο νόστον.

οἱ δὲ πλείους τὴν Βυβλίδα φασὶν ἐρασθεῖσαν τοῦ Καύνου λόγους αὐτῷ προσφέρειν καὶ δεῖσθαι μὴ περιδεῖν αὐτὴν εἰς πᾶν κακὸν προελθοῦσαν· ἀποστυγήσαντα δὲ οὕτως τὸν Καῦνον περαιωθῆναι εἰς τὴν τότε ὑπὸ Λελέγων κατεχομένην γῆν, ἔνθα κρήνη Ἑχηνίς, πόλιν τε κτίσαι τὴν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ κληθεῖσαν Καῦνον. τὴν δὲ ἄρα ὑπὸ τοῦ πάθους μὴ ἀνιεμένην, πρὸς δὲ καὶ δοκοῦσαν αἰτίαν γεγονέναι Καύνῳ τῆς ἀπαλλαγῆς, ἀναψαμένην ἀπὸ τινος δρυὸς τὴν μίτρην ἐνθεῖναι τὸν τράχηλον. λέγεται δὲ καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν οὕτως·

ἦ δ' ὅτε δὴ <ρ> ὀλοοῖο κασιγνήτου νόον ἔγνω,
κλαῖεν ἀηδονίδων θαμινώτερον, αἶ τ' ἐνὶ βήσσης
Σιθονίῳ κούρῳ πέρι μυρίον αἰάζουσιν.
καὶ ῥα κατὰ στυφελοῖο σαρωνίδος αὐτίκα μίτρην
ἀψαμένη δειρὴν ἐνεθήκατο· ταὶ δ' ἐπ' ἐκείνη
βεύδεα παρθενικαὶ Μιλησίδες ἐρρήξαντο.
φασὶ δὲ τινες καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν δακρύων κρήνην ῥυῆναι αἰδίδιον τὴν καλουμένην Βυβλίδα.

Byblis.

Aristocritus tells the story in his On Miletus, and Apollonius of Rhodes in the Foundation of Caunus.

Various stories are told about Caunus and Byblis, the children of Miletus. Nicaenetus says that Caunus fell in love with his sister, and that when the passion did not abate he left his home and travelled far from his native land, founding a city and settling there the scattered Ionians. He says in the following hexameters:

But faring further on, the town of Oecous / he founded, took to wife Celaeneus' daughter / Tragasia, who bore him justice-loving Caunus. / But like the slender poplars was her girl, / Byblis, whom Caunus loved against his will. / He left all in the mid-day heat, the snaky Cyprus fled, / and Caprus, home of wooded hills, and Caria's sacred streams (?). / The first Ionian, there he built his city. / But Byblis shared the nightingale's sad fate: / without the gates she mourned for Caunus gone.

Most, however, say that Byblis fell in love with Caunus and made overtures to him, begging him not to look on while she went through every sort of misery. But Caunus felt only loathing, and crossed over into the land at that time possessed by the Leleges, where there is a stream called Echeneis; and there he founded a city named Caunus after him. But as for her, her passion did not abate; and in addition, when she considered that she was the reason for Caunus departure, she fastened her girdle to an oak tree and put her neck in it. Here is my own version of the story:

And once she knew her cruel brother's mind / her shrieks came thicker than the nightingales' / in woods, who ever mourn the Thracian lad. / Her girdle to a rugged oak she tied, / and laid her neck within. And over her / Milesian maidens rent their lovely robes.

Some also say that an everlasting stream flowed from her tears, and that the stream's name was Byblis.

Translation Lightfoot.

Conon 2

Δεύτερον τὰ περὶ Βυβλίδος, ὡς παῖς ἦν Μιλήτῳ, ἔχουσα ἐξ αὐτῆς ἀδελφὸν Καῦνον. Ὅτι οὖν δὲ Μίλητον τῆς Ἀσίας, ἣν ὕστερον μὲν Ἴωνες καὶ οἱ ἀπ' Ἀθηνῶν μετὰ Νηλέως ὁρμηθέντες ὤκησαν, τότε δ' ἐνέμοντο Κᾶρες, ἔθνος μέγα, κωμηδὸν οἰκοῦντες. Καῦνῳ δ' ἔρωσ ἐγείρεται ἀμήχανος τῆς ἀδελφῆς Βυβλίδος· ὡς δ' ἀπετύγχανε πολλὰ κινήσας, ἔξεισι τῆς γῆς ἐκείνης. Καὶ ἀφανισθέντος μυρίῳ ἄχει κατεχομένη ἡ Βυβλὶς ἐκλείπει καὶ αὐτὴ τὴν πατρῴαν οἰκίαν, καὶ πολλὴν ἐρημίαν πλανηθεῖσα, καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἀτελεῖς ἡμέρους ἀπαγορεύουσα, βρόχον τὴν ζώνην τινὸς καρύας καθάψασα ἑαυτὴν ἀνήρτησεν. Ἐνθα δὲ κλαιούσης αὐτῆς ἐρρῦν τὰ δάκρυα καὶ κρήνην ἀνῆκε, Βυβλίδα τοῖς ἐπιχωρίοις ὄνομα· Καῦνος δὲ πλανώμενος εἰς Λυκίαν φθάνει, καὶ τούτῳ Προνόῃ (Ναῖς δ' ἦν αὕτη) ἀναδῦσα τοῦ ποταμοῦ τὰ τε συνενεχθέντα τῇ Βυβλίδι λέγει, ὡς ἐχρήσατο Ἑρωτι δικαστῇ, καὶ πείθει αὐτὸν αὐτῇ ἐπὶ τῇ τῆς χώρας λαβεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν, (καὶ γὰρ εἰς αὐτὴν ἀνῆπτο) συνοικῆσαι. Ὁ δὲ Καῦνος ἐκ τῆς Προνόης τίκει Αἰγιαλόν, ὃς καὶ παραλαβὼν τὴν βασιλείαν, ἐπεὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐτελεύτησεν, ἤθροισέ τε τὸν λαὸν σποράδην οἰκοῦντα καὶ πόλιν ἔκτισεν ἐπὶ τῷ ποταμῷ μεγάλῃ καὶ εὐδαίμονα, Καῦνον ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐπονομάσας.

The second is about Byblis, that she was the daughter of Miletos... having a brother Kaunos from her. They lived at Miletos in Asia, which Ionians and those who set out from Athens with Neleus later colonized, but which the Carians inhabited at that time, a populous race that lived in villages. There arose in Kaunos an impossible love for his sister Byblis, and when he had tried many things without success, he left the country. After he disappeared Byblis was utterly disconsolate, and she too left her father's house, wandering through a great wilderness, and despairing of her unsatisfied passions, she fastened her belt as a noose to a walnut tree and hanged herself. There, as she wept the tears poured down and created a spring, known to the local inhabitants as Byblis. Kaunos reached Lykia in the course of his wanderings, and Pronoe (she was a Naiad) rose from the river to tell him what had happened to Byblis—how she had

made Eros her judge—and persuaded him to live with her on the condition that he receive the rulership of the country (for it appertained to her). Kaunos fathered by Pronoe a son Aigialos, who also succeeded to the throne when his father died, assembled the people that lived in scattered groups, and founded a large and wealthy city by the river, naming it Kaunos after his father.

Translation Brown.

Ant. Lib. 30

Βυβλῖς.

[Ἰστορεῖ Νίκανδρος Ἑτεροιομένων β΄.]

Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ Ἀκακαλλίδος τῆς Μίνω θυγατρὸς ἐγένετο παῖς ἐν Κρήτῃ Μίλητος. τοῦτον ἡ Ἀκακαλλίς, δείσασα Μίνω, ἐξέβαλλεν εἰς τὴν ὕλην, καὶ αὐτὸν ἐπιφοιτῶντες λύκοι βουλῇ Ἀπόλλωνος ἐφύλαττον καὶ ὠρεγον παρὰ μέρος γάλα. ἔπειτα δὲ βουκόλοι περιτυχόντες ἀνείλοντο καὶ ἔτρεφον ἐν τοῖς οἰκείοις. ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁ παῖς ἠϋξέτο καὶ ἐγένετο καλὸς καὶ δραστήριος καὶ ὁ Μίνως κατὰ πόθον ἐνεχείρει βιάζεσθαι, τότε νυκτὸς ὁ Μίλητος ἐμβὰς εἰς ἄκατον βουλῇ Σαρπηδόνης εἰς Καρίαν ἀποδιδράσκει καὶ πόλιν ἐνταυθοῖ κτίσας Μίλητον ἔγημεν Εἰδοθέην τὴν Εὐρύτου θυγατέρα τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν Καρῶν. καὶ ἐγένοντο δίδυμοι παῖδας αὐτῇ Καῦνος [καὶ Βυβλῖς], ἀφ' οὗ πόλις ἐστὶν ἔτι νῦν ἐν Καρίᾳ Καῦνος, καὶ Βυβλῖς. ταύτης ἐγένοντο πλεῖστοι μνηστῆρες ἐπιχώριοι καὶ κατὰ κλέος ἐκ τῶν πέριξ πόλεων. ἡ δὲ τῶν μὲν λόγον ἐποιεῖτο βραχύν, αὐτὴν δὲ ἄφατος ἔρωσ ἐξέμηνε τοῦ Καῦνου. καὶ τὸ πάθος ἄχρι μὴν ἐδύνατο κρύπτειν ἐλελήθει τοὺς γονεῖς· ἐπεὶ δὲ καθ' ἡμέραν εἶχετο χαλεπωτέρῳ δαίμονι, νυκτὸς ἔγνω καταβαλεῖν ἐκ τῆς πέτρας ἑαυτήν. καὶ ἡ μὲν εἰς τὸ πλησίον ὄρος παρελθοῦσα ρίπτειν ἑαυτήν ἐπεχείρησε, νύμφαι δὲ κατέσχον οἰκτεῖρας καὶ πολλὸν ὕπνον ἐνέβαλον καὶ αὐτὴν ἥλλαξαν ἀπ' ἀνθρώπου εἰς δαίμονα καὶ ὠνόμασαν ἀμαδρυάδα νύμφην Βυβλίδα καὶ ἐποίησαντο συνδίατον ἐταιρίδα. καλεῖται δὲ καὶ τὸ ρέον ἐκ τῆς πέτρας ἐκείνης ἄχρι νῦν παρὰ τοῖς ἐπιχωρίοις Δάκρυον Βυβλίδος.

Byblis.

Nicander tells this story in the second book of his *Metamorphosis*.

In Crete Apollo and Acacallis, daughter of Minos, had a child called Miletus. Fearing Minos, Acacallis exposed him in a wood. By the will of Apollo wolves would turn up to guard him and to give him milk in turn. Then herdsmen came across him and gathered him up and brought him up in their huts.

As the lad grew, becoming handsome and active, Minos felt the urge to take him by force. So, on the advice of Sarpedon, Miletus boarded a boat one night and escaped to Caria. There he built the city of Miletus and married Eidothea, daughter of Eurytus king of Caria. She became the mother of twins, Caunus and Byblis after whom are named to this day the Carian cities of Caunus and Byblis.

Byblis attracted many local suitors and, because of her fame, some from nearby cities as well. She did not pay them much attention since an unspeakable desire for Caunus was driving her mad. Because she did all she could to hide this passion, she kept it from her parents. But daily she was being gripped by an even more unmanageable demon and one night she decided to throw herself from a rock.

She went to a nearby mountain and set about throwing herself off. But nymphs, pitying her, held her back. Casting her into a deep sleep they changed her from a mortal to a deity, and named the hamadryad nymph Byblis. They made her their companion and sharer of their way of life. The stream which flows from that rock is called to this day by local people the Tears of Byblis.